United Nations S/2017/78

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 January 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 23 January 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to a letter from my predecessor dated 21 December 2015 (S/2015/1025), in which he informed the President of the Security Council of the progress made by the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, and to her reply dated 23 December 2015 (S/2015/1026), in which she indicated that the members of the Council had taken note of his intention to continue the activities of the United Nations support team to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, with funding from the regular budget. I hereby wish to inform you of the latest achievements and activities of the Mixed Commission.

As you know, the United Nations established the Mixed Commission to facilitate the implementation of the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 10 October 2002 on the Cameroon-Nigeria boundary and territorial dispute. With the support of the Secretariat, my predecessor used his good offices to facilitate the implementation of the judgment.

The mandate of the Mixed Commission includes supporting the demarcation of the land boundary and delineation of the maritime boundary, facilitating the withdrawal and transfer of authority, addressing the situation of affected populations and making recommendations on confidence-building measures. Achievements to date in the implementation of the judgment include the withdrawal of Nigeria and the transfer of authority to Cameroon in the Lake Chad area (December 2003), along the land boundary (July 2004) and on the Bakassi Peninsula (a process that began in June 2006 and was completed in August 2008); the delineation of the maritime boundary (May 2007); and the end of the special transitional regime of five years, established under the Greentree Agreement in June 2006, and the exercise by Cameroon of its full rights of sovereignty over the Bakassi zone (August 2013). The Mixed Commission also approved all the recommendations of the Working Group on the Maritime Boundary, including the provisions for cross-border cooperation on hydrocarbon deposits straddling the boundary (March 2011).

In 2016, the Mixed Commission continued to facilitate the demarcation process, including by helping to maintain dialogue and communication between the two countries. Nevertheless, the security situation in parts of north-eastern Nigeria, resulting from attacks by Boko Haram, continued to impede the conduct of the envisaged field visits.

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Shortcomings of the in-office cartographic methodology delayed the completion of the remaining cartographic demarcation tasks. In an effort to overcome those shortcomings, a working session was held in August 2016. Solutions were recommended and are currently pending approval by the political authorities of the two countries. The Heads of State of Cameroon and Nigeria have renewed their commitment to resolving the outstanding issues in the cartographic demarcation process.

To date, the parties have agreed on the demarcation of 2,001 km of an estimated 2,100 km of land boundary. In November 2015, the United Nations support team held bilateral meetings and working sessions with the Cameroonian delegation to record and confirm toponyms for the final mapping. A similar exercise will be undertaken with the Nigerian delegation during the first quarter of 2017.

Meanwhile, the construction and emplacement of pillars to physically mark the land boundary has continued. Of the estimated 2,696 pillars that will be required, 903 have already been successfully constructed. In line with the completion strategy for the period 2015-2017, the construction and emplacement of an additional 238 pillars in lot 3, located in the central area of the land border, was completed in late March 2016. Construction is currently under way for the emplacement of an additional lot of 163 pillars by mid-2017. During the meeting of the heads of delegation in Yaoundé in October 2014, the parties formally expressed their willingness to make additional, individual contributions of resources towards the construction of the remaining 1,800 pillars required for the pillar emplacement project under the trust fund and also agreed to call upon international donors for renewed assistance. Since then, both parties have each pledged $1.5 million towards the replenishment of the trust fund. Additional fundraising initiatives were undertaken by my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel and Chair of the Mixed Commission, Mohammed Ibn Chambas, who travelled for this purpose to France, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as to the European Commission headquarters in Brussels, in October 2016.

Supplementary resources remain required to implement joint cross-border programmes in support of those affected by the demarcation. This includes funding for quick-impact projects for confidence-building among communities, with a particular focus on women and young people. In Cameroon, projects focused on food security and microcredit, access to drinking water, green energy, capacity-building for women, youth employment and protection of civilians in Bakassi and in the Far North region have been updated at the request of the Government to reflect demographic changes brought about by the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. The relevant documentation was endorsed and validated by the Government on 6 May 2016.

A programme document was submitted for endorsement by the Government of Nigeria (National Boundary Commission) in October 2016. The Chair of the Mixed Commission will seek extrabudgetary resources to help in the implementation of confidence-building projects, consistent with the revised United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks for both countries.

Meanwhile, the United Nations support team continues to work with the support of the Geospatial Information Section of the Department of Field Support of the Secretariat to produce maps to be annexed to the boundary statement. The collection

of toponyms was completed in 2016 and it is anticipated that the final mapping will be determined during the next working session, to be held early in 2017.

Overall, it is expected that the field assessment of the remaining areas of the boundary will be completed by the end of 2017. This, in turn, would facilitate progress with the finalization of the demarcation process, the completion of pillar emplacement operations and the production of final maps and a boundary statement. Through the good offices of my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, in his capacity as Chair of the Mixed Commission, the Presidents of Cameroon and Nigeria pledged in May 2016 their commitment to completing the demarcation of their joint border. The completion of the bulk of the demarcation work depends on the willingness of the two parties to formalize an agreement on all outstanding issues.

The following activities remain required in order to conclude the work of the Mixed Commission:

(a) Agreement on the remaining outstanding areas using in-office, desktop evaluation and demarcation methodology;

(b) Facilitation of the construction and emplacement of boundary pillars financed by the trust fund for the demarcation activities;

(c) Production of the final maps and the boundary statement;

(d) Promotion of cross-border cooperation, including maritime cooperation, and coordinated security monitoring along the land boundary;

(e) Finalization of confidence-building initiatives for local communities affected by the demarcation;

(f) Implementation of the completion strategy by progressively handing over the activities of the Mixed Commission to the Joint Bilateral Commission and other subregional structures.

Until 2003, the Mixed Commission was funded entirely from extrabudgetary resources. Thereafter, from 2004 to 2016, its activities were funded through the regular budget. The Governments of Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden and Uruguay have provided in-kind contributions for the substantive and technical work of the Commission (military and legal experts), in addition to the logistical support provided by the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria, and the voluntary contributions of both countries, as well as those of Canada, the United Kingdom and the European Union, to the trust fund for the demarcation activities.

As has been the case in recent years, and given the cost-effectiveness of the operation and the important tasks remaining at this juncture to help to advance the peaceful implementation of the judgment of the International Court of Justice, it is hoped that there will be approval of the Secretariat's request for continued resources from the regular budget for the United Nations support team, covering the year 2017.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**